

Challenges lie ahead

A whole new set of challenges await the transportation system in Wisconsin. If transportation is still to be a contributing factor to a growing economy, then the state will need to preserve infrastructure, provide additional mobility options, address transportation funding needs, and improve the productivity of the department.

Preserving an aging system to meet future transportation needs

Wisconsin has been served well by its roads, railroads, runways, harbors and transit systems. However, many of these systems are reaching the end of their useful physical lives, and need to be rebuilt to ensure adequate service for the future.

Wisconsin is undertaking a number of statewide system plans for highways, rail, airports and other modes that identify key system preservation needs.

Wisconsin's State Highway Plan 2020 calls for \$20.4 billion of investment in the State Highway System over 21 years. This funding will significantly reduce the number of pavement and bridge deficiencies throughout the 11,800 mile State Highway System.

The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 outlines \$1.1 billion of improvements to airports statewide through 2020. This investment will ensure safe and efficient runway and taxiway facilities at dozens of airports in the state, allowing fast and convenient travel.

Southeast Wisconsin Freeway System

The southeast Wisconsin freeway system is probably the most significant preservation need in the state transportation system.

The seven-county, 305 mile system represents just a fraction of the 112,000-miles of state and local roadway, but has widespread impacts on the transportation decisions our citizens and businesses make each day. It is the "heart" of Wisconsin's transportation system, serving as a backbone for commerce and the lifeline for Wisconsin's thriving economy.

As the most heavily-traveled hub in Wisconsin's transportation network, its outdated designs raise serious safety concerns, while it's rapidly deteriorating condition threatens to dampen the economic vitality of our entire state. Most of this freeway system was built in the 1960s and is reaching the end of its useful life.

Major challenges loom in designing and financing the replacement of these freeways, while minimizing the construction impacts on the general public.

The estimated cost to replace the southeast freeway system is \$5.4 billion or \$270 million per year for 20 years. Costs to replace the Marquette Interchange alone range from \$550 million to \$950 million, depending on the options chosen.

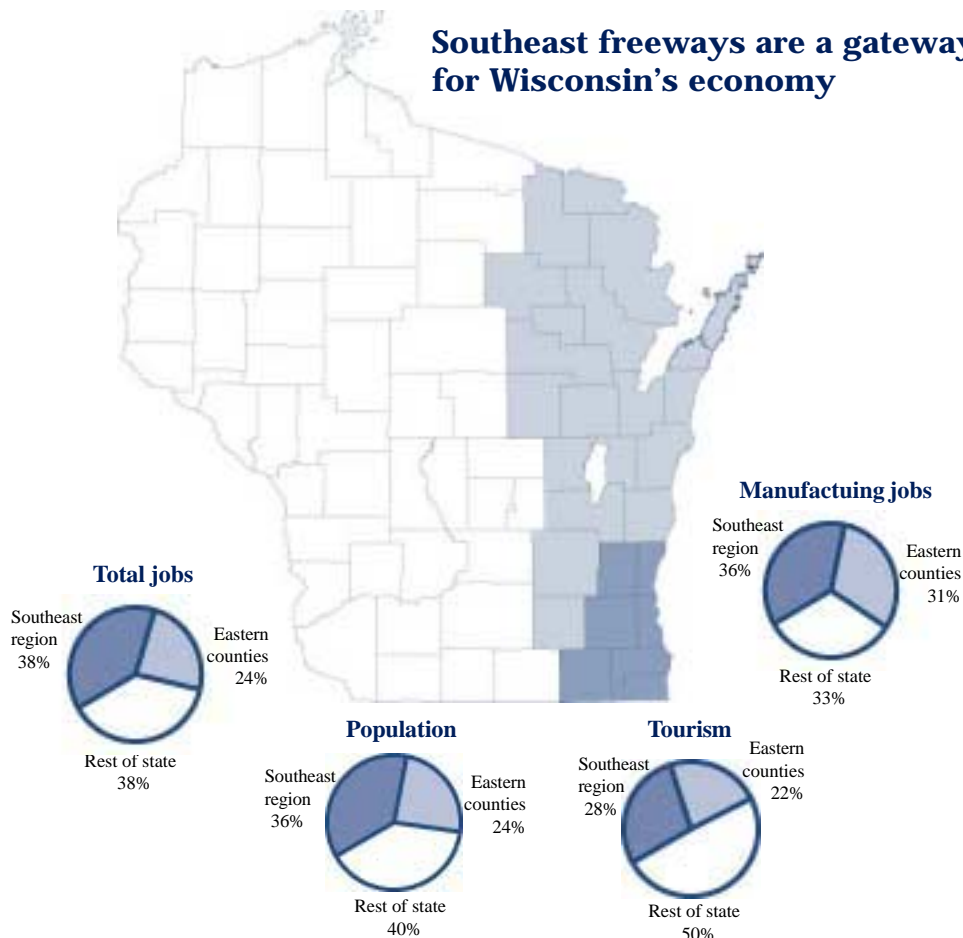
Two separate, but inter-related studies are underway - one looking specifically at alternatives for the Marquette Interchange and the other taking a broader perspective of the entire southeast freeway system. Both

"We are fortunate here in Wisconsin to have a top-notch transportation network, coupled with forward-thinking state and local leaders who are committed to maintaining the quality of this system. The transportation challenges we face in southeast Wisconsin have economic implications for the entire state, and there's a growing realization that addressing these issues will require a collective, statewide effort."

*Peter Beitzel
Vice President, Business Development
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce*

studies will help develop a better understanding of the emerging freeway issues, map out reconstruction alternatives, and keep citizens informed about the ongoing process.

Southeast freeways are a gateway for Wisconsin's economy



Where we're going

Providing new mobility choices

As the economy continues to grow and change, Wisconsin will need new transportation choices to meet a variety of mobility needs.

The socio-economic structure of society has changed greatly since much of the transportation system was originally built. Households are smaller and more numerous, “traditional” commuting hours and directions no longer apply, and the entire populace is more mobile.

One innovative program that seeks to meet new commuting needs is the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WE-TAP). This joint program between the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development combines a number of federal, state and local funding sources into a single program.

In 2000, WE-TAP awarded over \$6 million to provide lower income families with additional access to jobs, particularly through new transit options that provide “reverse commute” service from central cities to suburban job sites.

Wisconsin is also encouraging development of bicycling as a local transportation option. The State Bicycle Plan calls for a doubling in the number of bicycle trips in the state, while reducing crashes by at least 10% by 2010.



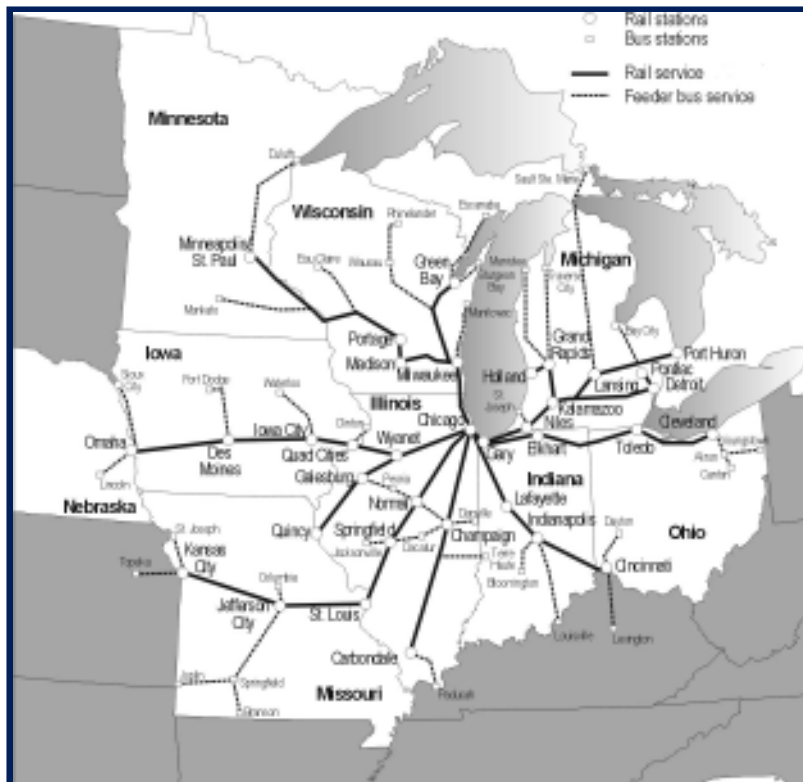
Forging a future for high-speed rail

Wisconsin is poised to take a leap forward into the future with the introduction of high-speed passenger rail service. WisDOT led a nine-state effort to identify the benefits and design an implementation plan for high-speed rail - resulting in the creation of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.

When completed, Midwest Rail will provide a 3,000 mile network of high-speed rail service, linking Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin. The system will feature new trains with first class amenities to serve over 60 million residents in the Midwest. The network will connect business and leisure travelers to urban areas and smaller cities, providing an essential transportation link.

In Wisconsin, the first phase of Midwest Rail calls for 110 MPH rail service between Madison and Milwaukee, and continuing to Chicago, by the end of 2003. Eventually, service would be extended from Madison to the Twin Cities, and from Milwaukee to Green Bay.

Proposed Midwest Regional Rail System Map



The prospect of high-speed rail is solid in Wisconsin. In December of 1999, Governor Thompson's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Passenger Rail Service issued its interim report that endorsed the Midwest Rail plan for Wisconsin. In late 2000, the state purchased the Amtrak depot in Milwaukee and is undertaking a major renovation of the station.

Nationally, Wisconsin is a leader of the *States for*

Passenger Rail Coalition that is pushing for a stronger federal funding role for passenger rail. Thanks in part to the coalition's support, the prospects for passage of a \$12 billion federal program for high-speed rail are very strong.

Various communities in Wisconsin are also examining the potential for commuter rail service along existing train lines in Dane County and southeastern Wisconsin.

Where we're going

Financing Wisconsin's future

In 1997, the Transportation Finance Study Committee comprised of state lawmakers and transportation stakeholder representatives, concluded that Wisconsin should broaden its funding base and not rely so heavily on fuel tax and vehicle registration fee revenues to fund the majority of its comprehensive transportation network. The WisDOT Office of Policy and Budget is studying how other states finance transportation, and is looking at different options for Wisconsin in order to diversify the revenue sources that support our multiple transportation modes.

The recently completed State Highway Plan has helped focus attention on the long-term funding issue. The plan requires \$5.1 billion more to implement than is projected to be available, under current funding mechanisms. Implementing the passenger rail recommendations and meeting the needs of the state's aviation system will also require additional funds.

All this implies that Wisconsin will have to work for more federal assistance, develop additional state revenue sources and consider providing local and regional governments revenue options to meet our growing transportation finance needs.

Finally, states like Wisconsin risk federal funding sanctions unless they comply with recently enacted federal legislation calling for a .08 blood-alcohol content as a national standard for drunk driving. If Wisconsin doesn't comply with the .08 mandate by 2004, it stands to lose about \$9 million in 2004, with steadily increasing losses of up to \$36 million in 2007.

Improving productivity

WisDOT has a skilled, creative and dedicated work force -- a work force that has been able to deliver significantly more transportation products over the years while staying constant in size. In the future, the department will undertake a number of initiatives to ensure that the transportation community continues to have a productive and highly skilled work force.

Managing human resources

At the heart of maintaining a quality transportation system is the employment of a quality transportation workforce responsive to the needs and concerns of the citizens of Wisconsin.

In order to meet this need, WisDOT has created responsive and innovative ways to obtain the most highly qualified people to guide and manage one of the best transportation departments in the nation into the 21st-century. Through internship and repayment programs such as the Minority Engineering Program, the Loan Repayment Incentive Grant Program, the Aviation Careers Education Program, and the Summer Affirmative Action Internship Program, future employees have the ability to learn about rewarding transportation careers.



Tomahawk, WI

Through programs and committees such as the Career Opportunity Growth System, the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, and the Training Advisory Council, current employees have the ability to explore different career paths and opportunities that exist and realize professional growth and advancement without having to look elsewhere.

This commitment to training helps the department maintain its quality workforce. Future initiatives include establishing a Corporate University, which will provide in-house training and education programs that align training and development issues with business strategies.

Technology is the future

In addition to the ITS and GPS advancements, WisDOT is continuing to investigate and implement new information technology initiatives.

One of the most far-reaching partnerships being implemented is the Wisconsin Local Roads (WISLR) Project. WISLR is a local/state partnership to create a database to incorporate key information on Wisconsin's local roadway system.

Technology will also aid in enforcement of motor carrier laws. One such technology, will allow for in-motion verification of truck credentials. This new option will free up the State Patrol to more efficiently target violators while letting most trucks proceed without significant delays.

Where we're going